

REMARKS

Claims 20, 21, 23 and 24 are currently pending in this application. Claims 1-19, 22, 25 and 26 have been canceled.

In the advisory action mailed March 28, 2006, it was indicated that claims 20, 21, 23 and 24 were allowable while claim 3 remained rejected. Claim 3 has now been canceled leaving only allowable claims 20, 21, 23 and 24 in this application.

As stated in the prior amendment after final, Claim 20 has been written into independent form to include all of the limitations of claim 19 and also incorporates the limitations of claims 25 and 26. These features in combination with the remaining elements of the claim are not disclosed in the combination of Sakauchi, Yamashita et al. and Fredette et al. Contrary to the assertions in paragraph 12 of the final rejection, Fredette et al. does not provide disclosure of a smart span wherein "routing protocol is responsible for discovery of neighbors, and link status, reliable distribution of routing topology information and optimal route determination" nor does Fredette et al. disclose that "signaling protocol provides the capability of establishing, tearing down and modifying connections across network nodes" as now required by claim 20.

Applicants have made a diligent and bona fide effort to answer each and every ground for rejection or objection to the specification including the claims and to place the application in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and further examination is respectfully requested, and for the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition to be passed to issue and such action is earnestly solicited.


It is believed that no additional fees are presently due. However, should that determination be incorrect, the undersigned hereby authorizes the Patent Office officials to debit Deposit Account No. 50-0562 to satisfy any and all fees which may be due.

Should the Examiner wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the undersigned at the below listed number.

Dated: April 11, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

Merek, Blackmon & Voorhees, LLC
673 S. Washington St.
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Tel. 703-684-5633
Fax. 703-684-5637



David H. Voorhees
Reg. No. 33,325
Attorney for Applicant